

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05

L-02 SAJ-01 NIC-01 SAM-01 PRS-01 /082 W

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R 211612Z MAR 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8516

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, XX, NO

SUBJECT: NORDIC PROPOSAL TO ICFTU COMMITTEE ON CONTACTS WITH
COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

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REF: OSLO 1086 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY DURING THE MARCH 7 MEETING OF THE ICFTU'S COMMITTEE ON CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST CONTROLLED TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS, NON-NORDIC PARTICIPANTS WERE MORE IMPRESSED WITH THE "RARE DISSENSION" WITHIN THE NORDIC GROUP THAN THEY WERE WITH THE NORDIC PROPOSAL ITSELF. NEVERTHELESS, THE PROPOSAL WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN SPARKING THE "SOBER" DEBATE REPORTED REFTEL CONCERNING ICFTU EAST-WEST POLICY AND WAS A FACTOR IN THE CONSENSUS DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE TO REAFFIRM THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD'S 1973 VIENNA DECLARATION WHICH ESTABLISHES PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR CONTACTS BETWEEN ICFTU AFFILIATED UNIONS AND COMMUNIST TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS. ACCORDING TO ICFTU OFFICIALS, THE CONSENSUS VIEW OF THE COMMITTEE WAS THAT THE VIENNA DECLARATION IS SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE AND IS NOT IN NEED OF BASIC REVISIONS ALTHOUGH AN "UPDATED" VERSION WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD IN JUNE.
END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO MISSION ICFTU CONTACTS, THE FORTH-RIGHT AND STRONGLY WORDED NORDIC PRESENTATIONS AT THE RECENT MEETING OF THE ICFTU'S COMMITTEE ON CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST CONTROLLED TRADE UNIONS (EAST-WEST COMMITTEE) WAS, ON THE WHOLE, WELL RECEIVED. THIS WAS CHIEFLY BECAUSE ALL BUT ONE OF THE POINTS CONTAINED IN THE NORDIC PROPOSAL COULD BE MORE OR LESS CATEGORIZED AS BEING LARGELY IN CONFORMITY WITH OR COVERED BY THE BROADLY FLEXIBLE PROVISIONS OF THE ICFTU'S VIENNA DECLARATION SETTING UP CONTACT GUIDELINES.

3. THE CONTROVERSIAL POINT OF THE NORDIC PROPOSAL WHICH WAS FOUND UNACCEPTABLE BY THE COMMITTEE, AND WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY DANISH LO REPRESENTATIVE K. AAKJAER SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF LO LEADER THOMAS NIELSEN, WAS WORDED AS FOLLOWS:

"... THAT WHEN THE ICFTU FOR VARIOUS REASONS CONSIDERS IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL TO MAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION IN A PARTICULAR SITUATION, OPPORTUNITY IS GIVEN TO AFFILIATED ORGANISATIONS OR GROUPINGS OF AFFILIATES TO ACT IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS NOT LOSING ITS INFLUENCE IN CRITICAL SITUATIONS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD."

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THE OBJECTIVES RAISED BY THE DANE AND OTHERS AND SUSTAINED BY THE COMMITTEE RELATED SPECIFICALLY TO "GROUPINGS OF AFFILIATES" WHICH THEY FELT WOULD CONSTITUTE MULTILATERAL CONTACTS WHICH THE VIENNA DECLARATION RECOMMENDS AGAINST.

4. IN SUMMARIZING AND PRESENTING THE CONSENSUS VIEW, ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, STATED THAT THE VIENNA DECLARATION WOULD BE "UPDATED" BUT NOT REVISED

AND THAT IT IS SUFFICIENTLY FLEXIBLE TO CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE BASIC GUIDELINE FOR CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. WE WERE TOLD BY ONE ICFTU OFFICIAL THAT THE UPDATING WOULD CONSIST OF DELETING OBSOLETE LANGUAGE RATHER THAN MAKING SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES. THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD WILL REVIEW THE UPDATED VERSION IN JUNE.

5. THE "CONSENSUS" DECISION OF THE EAST-WEST COMMITTEE WAS IN LINE WITH AN ICDTU SECRETARIAT'S RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN THE BASIC WORKING DOCUMENT FOR COMMITTEE DELIBERATION AS FOLLOWS:

"APART FROM THE WFTU AND ITS AFFILIATES GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF A MORE FRIENDLY ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT - AN ATTITUDE WHICH REFLECTS THE CURRENT USSR'S FOREIGN POLICY - IT WOULD APPEAR THAT, ON THE BASIS OF THE FACTS IN OUR POSSESSION, NOTHING NEW HAS ARISEN WITH REGARD TO THE CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN SOCIETY. IT WOULD SEEM THEREFORE THAT THE POLICY ADOPTED BY OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD IN VIENNA ON CONTACTS WITH COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS IS NOT IN NEED OF REVISION."

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6. COMMENT: IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ICFTU LEADERS GENERALLY ARE THOROUGHLY ATTUNED (IF NOT IMMUNE) TO THE NORDIC PREFERENCE FOR PLAIN SPEAKING. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME IN WHICH THE ICFTU HAS BEEN VERBALLY RAKED OVER THE COALS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUBJECTED TO NORDIC SNIPING FOR ITS DEFICIENCIES, ITS BLIND ANTI-COMMUNISM, ETC. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT NORDIC PROPOSALS ARE TAKEN LIGHTLY. NORDIC CONCERN FOR PORTUGAL FOR EXAMPLE IS BROADLY SHARED AND ICFTU OFFICIALS WILL ADMIT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL IS GREATLY HANDICAPPED BY ITS ESTABLISHED ANTI-COMMUNIST REPUTATION IN ITS OPERATIONS IN PORTUGAL. NEVERTHELESS, AS ONE OFFICIAL TOLD US, UNLEASHING THE NORWIGIANS OR "GROUPINGS" OF ICFTU AFFILIATES IN PORTUGAL WILL NOT ALTER CONDITIONS THERE AND WILL ONLY SUCCEED IN FURTHER WEAKENING THE ICFTU AS AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

7. THE QUOTATIONS CONTAINED HEREIN ARE TAKEN FROM OFFICIAL INTERNAL ICFTU DOCUMENTS AND SHOULD BE TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY. THE MISSION WILL SEND COPIES OF THE PREVIOUSLY-PUBLISHED ICFTU VIENNA DECLARATION TO ALL ADDRESSEE POSTS AND WILL SUBMIT DOCUMENTATION PERTAINING TO THE EAST-WEST COMMITTEE MEETING TO THE DEPARTMENT BY AIRGRAM. GREENWALD

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